

REMARKS

Claims 1-44 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 42-44 have been added and claims 1, 3, 5- 9, 12, 22, 24, 29 and 41 have been amended in view of the May 13 personal interview. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies extended by Examiner Rimell to Applicant's representative during the May 13 personal interview and the June 7 telephone conference. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Claims 1-16, 22-28 and 41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,509,900 issued to Ohsawa et al. (hereinafter "Ohsawa"). The rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

As suggested by Examiner Rimell during the May 13 personal interview and the June 7 telephone conference, Applicant has amended claims 1, 22 and 41 to clarify the claims over the reference. Applicant submits that Ohsawa fails to disclose all the features of amended claims 1, 22 and 41 as well as all the features of claims 2-16 and 23, which depend from claims 1 and 22, respectively.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 24-28 are at least allowable for the reasons discussed in the April 16, 2004 Amendment.

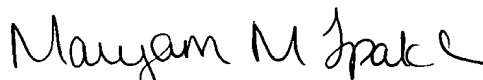
It is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-16, 22-28 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) be withdrawn.

Claims 17-21 and 29-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ohsawa in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,421,141 issued to Nishikawa. The rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Further, for at least the reasons presented in the Amendment filed on April 16, Applicant submits that the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa fails to disclose all the features of claims 17-21 and 29-40. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 17-21 and 29-40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-41 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



Mario A. Costantino
Registration No. 33,565

Maryam M. Ipakchi
Registration No. 51,835

MAC:MMI/ccs

Attachment:
Amendment Transmittal

Date: June 14, 2004

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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